

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 4-7, and 10-12 are pending in this application. Claims 3 and 9 are canceled by the present response without prejudice. Claims 1, 4, 7, and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by JP 05-284501 to Kato. Claims 5, 6, 11, and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kato. Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kato in view of U.S. patent 6,766,059 to Kondo.

Claims 3 and 9 were objected to, but were noted as allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of their base claims and any intervening claims. Applicants gratefully acknowledge that indication of the allowable subject matter.

The present response is submitted to place this application in condition for allowance based on the indication of allowable subject matter in the outstanding Office Action. Specifically, by the present response independent claim 1 now incorporates the subject matter from allowable dependent claim 3, and similarly independent claim 7 now incorporates the subject matter from allowable dependent claim 9. The outstanding Office Action indicated such subject matter was allowable, and thereby applicants respectfully submit each of amended independent claims 1 and 7, and the claims dependent therefrom, recite allowable subject matter.

Further, the present response adds new dependent claims 13 and 14 for examination, which depend respectively from independent claims 1 and 9, and thus those new dependent claims 13 and 14 are also believed to be allowable. The features recited in new claims 13 and 14 are also believed to be clear from the original specification, see for example page 9, line 11 et seq.

In view of the present response each of the currently pending claims is believed to recite subject matter indicated as allowable in the outstanding Office Action. Thereby, it is respectfully requested that this application is now in condition for allowance, and it is hereby respectfully requested that this application now be passed to issue.

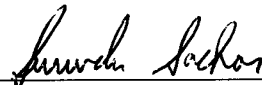
Respectfully submitted,

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